



NEWS RELEASE

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JUNEAU MEN RECEIVE JAIL TIME FOR ILLEGALLY SELLING WALRUS IVORY

Anchorage, Alaska – United States Attorney Nelson P. Cohen announced today, September 28, 2007, that Frederick R. Reynolds, a resident of Juneau, Alaska, was sentenced in federal court in Anchorage, to eight months in prison for his conviction of conspiring to sell walrus ivory and other walrus parts in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Chief United States District Court Judge John W. Sedwick imposed the sentence on Reynolds, age 53.

According to information presented to the court by Assistant United States Attorney Steven Skrocki, Reynolds, along with co-defendant Michael Sofoulis, collected parts from walrus carcasses found on beaches in and around Pilot Point, Alaska. Both Reynolds and Sofoulis then illegally sold the walrus ivory and walrus bone in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act which prevents the transportation, sale, purchase and export of non-tagged walrus parts by individuals who are not Alaska Natives. Federal regulations allow anyone, Native or non-Native to collect parts from dead walrus found on beaches or land within a quarter-mile of the ocean, but the finder must report the collected parts to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within 30 days. Once the parts are registered and tagged, they become the property of the finder and cannot be sold, traded, or given away without the written permission of the agency.

Reynolds, who lived part-time in Pilot Point, would collect beach-found walrus ivory and in some instances would fail to have the ivory tagged within 30 days by a licensed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service tagger as required by law. After possessing the ivory and cleaning it for sale, Reynolds would offer the walrus ivory and other parts for sale to friends or tourists, often in amounts exceeding several thousand dollars. In other instances, Reynolds would attempt to conceal the illegal sales by providing false information on federal documents by claiming the buyer as the person who actually found the ivory or walrus parts. Agents of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service seized ten walrus head mounts that were sold illegally to other individuals by Reynolds and Sofoulis under this part of the scheme.

As part of the plea agreement, Reynolds abandoned to the Fish and Wildlife Service approximately 50 walrus teeth, two jaw bones with teeth, an oosik, and one walrus skull and tusk head mount.

Reynold's co-defendant Michael Sofoulis pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor violation of conspiracy to violate the Marine Mammal Protection Act and was sentenced by U.S. Magistrate Judge Phillip Pallenberg, in June, 2007. As part of his plea agreement, Sofoulis was sentenced to six months in prison, serve one year of probation, fined \$15,000, ordered to pay \$5,000 in restitution to the State of Alaska and ordered to forfeit all walrus parts to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including two walrus tusk head mounts.

Mr. Cohen commended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the investigation leading to the successful prosecution of Reynolds.

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